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ART. IX. — A LOOK BEFORE AND AFTER.

EVEN during our civil war, there were those who, while they had no doubt of the final triumph of the nation in its physical struggle, looked forward with well-founded foreboding to the more serious conflict of opinion and prejudice, of exultations and resentments, that was sure to follow. If the victories of peace are not less renowned than those of war, it is because they are more difficult, because they are decided by forces less palpable and harder to combine or to control. Physical force may be bought in the market; a certain average of courage may be reckoned on; good generalship is not rarer than effective faculty in the higher kinds of other business; and even the winning of a decisive battle may be due in great part to other things than the personal qualities of the commander. But to gather the fruits of successful war demands powers of greater range and more various training. During a conflict like ours, the moral instincts of the people are kindled to a fervor which adds immensely to their fighting weight, but which cannot be kept at that white heat, and would be dangerous, if it could. Enthusiasm is the most radiant of human qualities; there are moments when it is the highest wisdom; but the very source of its strength—that it can see but one thing, and is ready to sacrifice all for it—unfits it for the slower processes and the necessary compromises of successful statesmanship. Its motto is, “All or nothing”; that of the statesman, “The best that can be got under the circumstances.” An artificial enthusiasm, kept alive by the artifices of party, has nothing in common with the real virtue, except its contempt of experience, and its leaving consequences to take care of themselves,—things sometimes of incalculable value in great crises, but dangerous, if reduced to a principle of conduct and a method of action in ordinary affairs. For the efficient and economical housekeeping of a nation, prudence and moderation will be found safest in the long run.

A great victory, unless it lead to something greater beyond, unless it definitely settle something which could not otherwise be solved, is the most futile and costly of human achievements.

It is as meaningless as a tussle of dogs in the street. It is after the victory that the Sphinx of politics propounds her riddle, that seems so easy, and *is* so easy, if rightly looked at, and yet is apt to go so long a-begging for its *Œdipus*. The consequences of defeat are bitter enough, but they are comparatively simple, and have only to be accepted with the best patience at command; those of victory are complex and difficult, entailing tremendous responsibilities, and demanding political wisdom — as rare as political shiftiness is common — to direct, secure, and consolidate them. “What are you going to do about it?” is always an uncomfortable question, perhaps the hardest to answer off-hand of all that Destiny puts to men, and yet one that she is sure to put, sooner or later. Is it on the whole wise even to try to answer it off-hand at all? It is a question which, in the days of legend, demanded a hero for its solution: can a people find a satisfactory reply to it in the age of newspapers and universal suffrage, where every man has his share of influence or power, and no man his share of responsibility and retribution? That is the problem which the war has left upon our hands. To point, as our election orators are wont to do, at our vast sacrifices of men and money, as if they proved anything but our willingness to grapple heroically with a great danger, may satisfy our pride, but otherwise leaves us precisely where we were. The main point is not what we have spent, but what we have got or are to get for it. That the war quickened and concentrated our national consciousness, made us feel that we were a commonwealth with a single vitality, with vast destinies and severe duties before it, and not a heterogeneous something, half business-partnership, half debating-club, is already a great gain, if we can keep it. That we have got rid of slavery, the single barbarous and alien element in our constitution, and got rid of it in the only possible way, is another great gain. Greatest of all, perhaps, as a stimulant of self-respect and of that public sense of propriety which is the conscience of nations, our diplomatic complications from 1861 to 1865 have shown us, as nothing else could have done, how intimate was our relation to the great civilized communities of the Old World; and while the war has made us less sensitive to foreign criticism in trifles, it has also convinced us as never

before that we are amenable to it in those more substantial matters by which the world makes up its judgment of national character. The public opinion of the world is gradually supplanting that of the village, the county, or the nation. It is a new and powerful principle in civilization, destined to supply that tribunal the want of which has made international law inoperative, or susceptible of whatever interpretation the strongest could wrest from it. Steam and the telegraph have forced upon us the wholesome restraint and corrective of a publicity as wide as the area of the printing-press. We shall be likely to have less and less of that backwoods and frontier element in our politics and legislation, of that lawless ignorance which conceived Americanism to consist in despising the precedents and principles whose gradual accumulation is but another name for the moral sense of mankind. What we do is no longer done in a corner, and our members of Congress will become at length conscious, that, when they show their want of culture or conscience or decency, they do it in the eyes of Europe, thereby lessening the influence of their country in the councils of the world. Constituencies will become shier of smart men and more solicitous of solid ones, will begin to see that character is the highest of all possible talents, and the only one that has a steady weight in those scales by which nations are tried.

But the war has left us some perilous as well as profitable legacies. The public debt and its consequent taxation we reckon only as temporary external discomforts, in face of the fact that all our people belong to the laboring class, and that even our ditchers and delvers live in more comfort than ever before, better, indeed, than the skilled artisans of other countries. But may not the experience of our war have left us with too much faith in luck, with too scornful a disregard for adverse opinion and criticism? Did not its necessities accustom our minds to swift expedients, justifiable only by immediate danger, never justifiable in peaceful legislation, and out of place now that there is time for forecast and deliberation, now that we are acting, not for the moment, but for the future? The happy self-confidence, snatching advantage and ignoring remote consequences, that was a necessity during the war,

may become not only of no value, but positively mischievous, in the humdrum work of settlement. We do not fear any ill effects upon the character of our soldiers from the training of those four years. To them it was a severe and sobering school, steadying the character rather than relaxing it, as all hard work for a great and definite object is sure to do. No safe step can be taken in war that does not give a lesson of forecast as well as decision, that does not involve tedious preparation no less than readiness to act at the right moment. But it may well be feared that the war may have been less happy in its effect upon the temper of our active politicians. The necessity it imposed of clearing obstacles out of the way at any cost, and especially of turning victories to instant account in politics, naturally engendered in them a habit of impatience for immediate results, one might almost say a taste for legislative daring, very far from desirable in the conduct of government. A body so large as Congress is always more or less subject to those gregarious impulses that make a mob. In times of great excitement, such a body is liable to be carried away in these sentimental rushes without well-considered direction, and with no result that has not to be paid for sooner or later in damages. The Republican majority in Congress, dangerously out of proportion to its relative preponderance in the country, acquired a taste for omnipotence that would have required omniscience to restrain and guide it,—and unhappily omniscience in this world is the attribute only of the inexperienced and half educated. Unhappily also, omnipotence is irresponsible, and it is not on responsibility to the people merely, but to right reason and the well tried results of human experience, that popular government rests.

If a taste for theatrical effects has been quickened by the alternate elations and depressions of the war, the frequency of our Congressional and State elections, and the vicious theory of rotation in office, are to be taken into account as a constantly active cause working in the same direction. All these tend to produce a state of things as disastrous to wholesome legislation as the fashion of serial publication in fiction has been fatal to sound literature. As in the modern novel there must be a culmination of interest in every number, so

in every session of Congress some measure must be hurried through that will gratify the feverish expectation of party, or revive the flagging interest of the country. Nay, as almost every member is scarcely warm in his seat ere he finds it necessary to devote all his energies to keeping himself there, the natural endeavor of each is to render himself conspicuous rather than useful, and to cater to the momentary prejudices or narrow local interests of his district rather than to devote himself to the wants of the country and to a policy that looks beyond the next election. Thus, Congress is ready, in defiance of common sense, and with utter contempt for international law, to encourage a distinctively foreign organization within our own which may at any time involve the country in war, and, in the face of every established principle of political economy, nay, of simple arithmetic, to resolve that eight hours are equal to ten. If ever a sufficient number of Southern emigrants should establish themselves in Canada to frame a skeleton confederacy, ready at the first opportunity to fill up its ranks and do us a mischief, and always fomenting dissatisfaction in the lately rebellious States, our legislators would be foreclosed from remonstrance. And it does not seem to us the proper office of legislation, in a country where there is more work to do than hands to do it with, to encourage idleness, or try to put muscular on a level with intelligent labor, when we must compete with nations that still call ten ten, and know that brains are greater sources of production than hands. Hitherto one of the great claims of popular government upon the interest, if not the respect, of mankind, has been its cheapness in money. But in the long run wisdom is the only true measure of cheapness, because it saves the cost of continually doing things over again; and we have yet to see whether our system of polity, as at present worked, strong as it has proved itself in war, be able to produce trained statesmen, in whom sound judgment has become something like instinct, as well as clever and unscrupulous soldiers of fortune, with no character to lose and nothing higher than office to gain. Experience would have bred in us a rooted distrust of improvised statesmanship, even if we did not believe politics to be a science, which, if it cannot always command men of special apti-

tude and great powers, at least demands the long and steady application of the best powers of such men as it can command to master even its first principles. It is curious, that, in a country which boasts of its intelligence, the theory should be so generally held that the most complicated of human contrivances, and one which every day becomes more complicated, can be worked at sight by any man able to talk for an hour or two without stopping to think.

Mr. Lincoln is sometimes claimed as an example of a ready-made ruler. But no case could well be less in point; for, besides that he was a man of such fair-mindedness as is always the raw material of wisdom, he had in his profession a training precisely the opposite of that to which a partisan is subjected. His experience as a lawyer compelled him not only to see that there is a principle underlying every phenomenon in human affairs, but that there are always two sides to every question, both of which must be fully understood in order to understand either, and that it is of greater advantage to an advocate to appreciate the strength than the weakness of his antagonist's position. Nothing is more remarkable than the unerring tact with which, in his debate with Mr. Douglas, he went straight to the reason of the question; nor have we ever had a more striking lesson in political tactics than the fact, that, opposed to a man exceptionally adroit in using popular prejudice and bigotry to his purpose, exceptionally unscrupulous in appealing to those baser motives that turn a meeting of citizens into a mob of barbarians, he should yet have won his case before a jury of the people. Mr. Lincoln was as far as possible from an impromptu politician. His wisdom was made up of a knowledge of things as well as of men; his sagacity resulted from a clear perception and honest acknowledgment of difficulties, which enabled him to see that the only durable triumph of political opinion is based, not on any abstract right, but upon so much of justice, the highest attainable at any given moment in human affairs, as may be had in the balance of mutual concession. Doubtless he had an ideal, but it was the ideal of a practical statesman, — to aim at the best, and to take the next best, if he is lucky enough to get even that. His slow, but singularly masculine, intelligence taught him that precedent is only another name

for embodied experience, and that it counts for even more in the guidance of communities of men than in that of the individual life. He was not a man who held it good public economy to pull down on the mere chance of rebuilding better. Mr. Lincoln's faith in God was qualified by a very well-founded distrust of the wisdom of man. Perhaps it was his want of self-confidence that more than anything else won him the unlimited confidence of the people, for they felt that there would be no need of retreat from any position he had deliberately taken. The cautious, but steady, advance of his policy during the war was like that of a Roman army. He left behind him a firm road on which public confidence could follow; he took America with him where he went; what he gained he occupied, and his advanced posts became colonies. The very homeliness of his genius was its distinction. His kingship was conspicuous by its workday homespun. Never was ruler so absolute as he, nor so little conscious of it; for he was the incarnate common sense of the people. With all that tenderness of nature whose sweet sadness touched whoever saw him with something of its own pathos, there was no trace of sentimentalism in his speech or action. He seems to have had but one rule of conduct, always that of practical and successful politics, to let himself be guided by events, when they were sure to bring him out where he wished to go, though by what seemed to unpractical minds, which let go the possible to grasp at the desirable, a longer road.

Undoubtedly the highest function of statesmanship is by degrees to accommodate the conduct of communities to ethical laws, and to subordinate the conflicting selfishnesses of the day to higher and more permanent interests. But it is on the understanding, and not on the sentiment, of a nation that all safe legislation must be based. Voltaire's saying, that "a consideration of petty circumstances is the tomb of great things," may be true of individual men, but it certainly is not true of governments. It is by a multitude of such considerations, each in itself trifling, but all together weighty, that the framers of policy can alone divine what is practicable and therefore wise. It seems to us that there has been lately a growing disposition to confound the private con-

science with the public policy. There is a class of people who would think the Sermon on the Mount safer, if it were reaffirmed by a resolution of Congress, and that a two-thirds vote would give the Decalogue a sort of temporary superiority over even so great a man as President Johnson. Forgetful of the warning, that "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light," ethics have been called on to perform the function of jurisprudence and political economy, and to make arithmetic know her place as the servant of conscience. An easy profession of faith in certain abstract principles is getting to be the highest qualification of a legislator, and to affirm himself morally right in respect to a single article of the party creed is considered a set-off for being practically wrong in all that makes the private character of a representative of any advantage to the country. Conscience and character are, of course, prime qualities in a representative, but they are not in themselves enough. There should be added to them the special kind of training and the peculiar cast of mind that would induce us to put our private affairs into his hands for management. We select men for the highest and most momentous kind of business which mortals are called to deal with on less consideration than we should think prudent in choosing an attorney. We should deem it less foolish to trust ourselves to a heaven-born engine-driver than to a statesman who depended on immediate inspiration, or, still worse, on a divination of that great popular instinct which is often nothing more than the special unwisdom prevailing for the moment among the wirepullers of his particular district.

The course of events, rather than any great skill in statesmanship it had yet had a chance to show, gave to the Republican party a noble and commanding position. It was, for a time of necessity, the party of the country. Under its leadership, such as it was, and in Mr. Lincoln's hands it bid fair to be sagacious and far-seeing, our very existence as a nation had been asserted and secured. The people of the Free States had risen from their first confusion of angry surprise, through doubt, alarm, and revulsion from defeated over-confidence, to such a height of steady resolve and intelligent purpose as men can be forced up to only by the enthusiasm of a

supreme crisis. A common peril enforced a common duty, which left no room for nice metaphysical distinctions, which had not nor could have any charity for that free play of opinion within its habitual sockets and grooves for which in ordinary times a necessary allowance is made. Men were led to the polls, as into action, by a despotic motive that trampled on every-day considerations of policy or interest. This condition of public sentiment put almost unlimited power into the hands of the party to which it gave control of the government. During the war it had been necessary to force things through by mere weight of numbers, with a single object in view so absorbing as to make all adverse opinions, all criticism, all suggestion of doubt seem unreasonable or even dangerous. Loyalty was very properly made the single measure of fitness for office. This was plainly a state of things that could not last; and yet there was danger that the party left in power by the triumph of the nation should continue to employ the tactics it had learned during four exceptional years, after a total change of circumstances had rendered them inapplicable and therefore mischievous. Disguise it from ourselves as we might, it was a revolution we were going through; and in such times extreme measures, if not the wisest, are the most easily apprehended, and for that reason the most acceptable to the mass of men. To minds at a white heat the normal relations of things are dislocated. Moderation loses its value and becomes lukewarmness, violence steals the merit of zeal, and the loudest tongue gains credit for the deepest conviction.

During the war, the Republican party was the country, and loyalty to it was loyalty to the country. But within the last three years this test has been growing more and more fallacious. The result of the war, whether willingly or not, has been accepted by all parties as final, and a wholly new class of questions has come up for settlement. Men may very well assent to the necessity which compels an absorption of all the powers of government by the legislative branch of it, who yet look upon the precedent as dangerous, and believe that such abnormal powers should be used with the most scrupulous parsimony. Men may have thought the impeachment proceedings unwise, and the conduct of them humiliatingly disreputable, without esteem-

ing Mr. Johnson a judicious magistrate, or indeed anything better than a warning how dangerous it is to make a single merit the test of official fitness, without regard to general character. Some may have believed the interregnum of a President in search of a following not altogether a calamity, if it gave the two great parties which divided public opinion time to settle down upon the new issues presented by peace. It does not seem to us criminal to have thought that the country would gain nothing by exchanging the impotent violence of Mr. Johnson for the violence of Mr. Wade with an excited majority of Congress to back it, six months of which would have given us Mr. Seymour for President. And yet, with the lesson of the Democratic party before their eyes, whose unscrupulous subordination of statesmanship to the interests of party had brought on the war, and reduced a triumphant political organization to an incoherent faction, the Republican managers seemed at one time bent on making the same immoral policy a leading article in the party creed. The real power of a party is not in its majorities, but in its ideas, — not in the subservience, but in the *morale*, of its members. The long possession of power had given the Democratic leaders a cynical contempt for this truth, and the Republicans, whose whole strength was derived from their superior ethical position, showed symptoms of the same corrupting influence. They forgot that the steady set of opinion is not indicated, far less controlled, by an assent to whatever measures may be forced from a precarious majority by the machinery of party, but is to be divined from that average and compromise of conflicting judgments in the moderate men of all parties upon which the general mind is sure sooner or later to fall back. In the first heat of disappointment at the failure of impeachment, it was proposed to purge the party of some of the ablest men in its ranks, men who had stood every test to which public life is exposed, whose unblemished character should have shielded them from base imputations, and whose conscientiousness was of more value to the very men with whom they refused to act than any momentary triumph could have been. It was at one time doubtful whether the taste which a two-thirds majority in Congress had acquired for short-cuts in legislation would not restore to their adversaries the position they had lost.

The Republicans carried the country upon an issue in which ethics were more directly and visibly mingled with politics than usual. Their leaders were trained to a method of oratory which relied for its effect rather on the moral sense than the understanding. Their arguments were drawn, not so much from experience as from general principles of right and wrong. When the war came, their system continued to be applicable and effective, for here again the reason of the people was to be reached and kindled through their sentiments. It was one of those periods of excitement, gathering, contagious, universal, which, while they last, exalt and clarify the minds of men, giving to the mere words *country*, *human rights*, *democracy*, a meaning and a force beyond that of sober and logical argument. They were convictions, maintained and defended by the supreme logic of passion. That penetrating fire ran in and roused those primary instincts that make their lair in the dens and caverns of the mind. What is called the great popular heart was awakened, that indefinable something which may be, according to circumstances, the highest reason or the most brutish unreason. But enthusiasm, once cold, can never be warmed over into anything better than cant,—and phrases, when once the inspiration that filled them with beneficent power has ebbed away, retain only that semblance of meaning which enables them to supplant reason in hasty minds. Among the lessons taught by the French Revolution there is none sadder or more striking than this, that you may make everything else out of the passions of men except a political system that will work, and that there is nothing so pitilessly and unconsciously cruel as sincerity formulated into dogma. It is always demoralizing to extend the domain of sentiment over questions where it has no legitimate jurisdiction; and if ever the capacity of men for self-government might be doubted, it was when a party whose claim to public confidence rested upon its superior political purity insisted on the conviction of Mr. Johnson, not according to the law and the evidence, but because it was called for by the moral sentiment of the people. In Indiana the moral sentiment of the people, on precisely similar grounds, has just broken open a jail, shot the sheriff who was faithful to his

duty, and hanged four men not yet convicted of any crime. Political, like all other morality, does not consist in any abstract principles, but in the application of those principles, according to our best judgment, to every case that arises, as nearly as circumstances will allow.

The Republican party, so long accustomed to deal with problems into which morals entered largely and directly, is now to be tried solely by its competency for other duties. The questions with which it finds itself face to face are practical ones, upon which morals have only that general bearing which connects them with the scope of all human action. The watchwords of party will no longer serve to conjure with, and, the final death-blow having been given to reaction by the late election, it will be possible to give cooler consideration to many subjects of the first importance than was possible during the heat and hurry of the canvass. The present Congress may smooth the way for its successor, and for General Grant's administration, by taking the initiative in several essential reforms. First of all in importance is Mr. Jenckes's Civil Service Bill. Our present system of appointments to office is not only scandalously wasteful, but is doing more to lower the tone of public morals than all other causes together. It involves every member of Congress in a network of corrupt bargains, from which there is no escape, and which is none the less gross, while it is more fatal to the soundness of our institutions, because the bribe for unscrupulous service is paid in office instead of money. As competence is the last qualification regarded, the very government itself keeps before the eyes of the people a standing incentive to dishonesty by paying high wages for poor work, and encourages the mischievous notion, already too common, that, because in this country any man may aspire to any place, any man is therefore fit for any place. It debases political opinion by offering it the reward of office, and, in our frequent changes of power from one party to another, tempts every present incumbent to suit his principles, by whatever casuistry he may, to those of the incoming administration. In a country where, more than in any other, the public welfare is dependent on the private character of the citizen, it positively offers a premium to venality. It has be-

gotten among us a horde of speculators, not in the public securities, but in the Public Security, who get up a corner in politics with as little regard to consequences as in the stock-market. The stock they gamble in is the honor and integrity of the country. It is idle to talk of election frauds, so long as this state of things continues and grows worse; for such frauds are the natural and inevitable consequence of making the public service a scramble of personal profit, instead of being the legitimate reward of merit, fitness, and character. The evil thus wrought spreads far beyond the circle of politics; for national morality, like national credit, is unitary, and the disease of one member infects all the rest. The change in the names by which we call things shows that our moral standard is lower. A swindle is called an operation, a rogue a financier, the unscrupulousness in politics which would once have received the brand of knavery is admired as smartness, and the sense of shame is lost in the multitude of those who share it. Congress itself is fast becoming a brokers' board for operators on the Treasury. Corporate interests are beginning to be represented there quite as much as the political opinions of constituencies; and so universal is the want of faith in honest motive, that not a measure can pass, involving the payment of public money, without charges of corruption. We do not say that they are true, but the general readiness to believe them proves that general confidence in uprightness, one of the main props of national conscience, is shaken. The sixty years' integrity of a man like Mr. Fessenden cannot shield him from imputations which in a truly honest community would be the ruin of those who made them. Such charges are so common that they have produced an indifference on the part of the public, which protects the criminal while it wrongs the innocent beyond repair. No distinction is made between the man who has rolled himself in the gutter and those whom he can contrive to bespatter. *Aliquid hæret.* The principle of Mr. Jenckes's bill, if introduced into one branch of the public service, could not long be without effect upon all. The spectacle of honesty and competence recognized as the only sterling standard, the resumption of a specie basis in morals, would give back to character the proper pre-

eminence which it is fast losing, if it have not already lost. The new system would give to trained intelligence the leadership which legitimately belongs to it, and which in time of peril it always asserts. It would secure respect for the government, by giving steadiness, coherence, and moral purpose to its operations. It would assure to the nation the intelligent loyalty of a large body of picked men in all parts of the country, whose allegiance would be transferred from State and party to the central and permanent power, thus reducing State Rights within legitimate boundaries by a process constant in its operation and silent in its processes. It would be gradually found out that more was to be got by living *for* the country than by trying to live *on* it. We should get rid in great measure of those selfish interests which give an almost revolutionary passion to our quadrennial elections. It is to Jefferson that we owe our present system, if we may call by so respectable a name what is really an infallible recipe for chaos. He was a true *doctrinaire*, who had learned in France to confound the office of poet with that of statesman, and accordingly believed the problem of the politician to be "to conform the shows of things to the desires of the mind." Unhappily, it is the realities of things that must be brought into that desirable conformity, an operation much more tedious, because it deals with imperfect men, and not with ideas. His notion rightly was, that the servants of the state should be in sympathy with the administration, but he made the mistake of putting the temporary administrator in place of the permanent executive. Jefferson contented himself with introducing the principle, a semi-barbarian like Jackson found no difficulty in pushing it to its practical conclusion, that "to the victors belong the spoils." Since then, at every change of administration, the subordinate offices of the government, on which all the efficacy of the superior ones depends, have been literally sacked by the triumphant majority, like a city taken by storm. The very sanctuary of order was invaded, and sober-minded men saw with horror the sacred vessels hawked about for sale and desecrated in ruffian orgies. A despotism may be maintained by the genius of him who wields it, a constitutional monarchy may live for some time on the credit of its past, but

a democracy cannot survive the wide-spread corruption of its citizens, or, if it survive, it is only to sink lower and lower toward barbarism.

Another scarcely less important subject demanding the attention of Congress is the business of finance and taxation. It is not only wars, but nations, that "go upon their bellies." Material prosperity is the first element in social amelioration and political enlightenment. It is here particularly that want of training and special culture has been disastrously conspicuous in our legislation. Though the experience of other nations has demonstrated certain principles of political economy in relation to public debts, to paper currency, and the conditions under which specie payments may be resumed, there seems to be hardly a member of Congress who is aware of it, and we have as many conflicting projects as there are men profoundly ignorant that the measures they are called upon to debate belong to science, and not to speculation. Every petty local interest thrusts itself into the discussion; and, as almost every one of them has its special representative on the floor of Congress, it seems to be overlooked that it is only on general principles, applicable to the whole country and looking to a long future, that a settlement can be reached best for each because good for all. Above all, there is something pitiable in the spectacle of a great nation's representatives contriving how they may evade the plain meaning of our obligations, and manage without being too explicit to say enough to reassure the honest without disaffecting the unprincipled. On such a question there can be no compromise. Any plan to save the mercantile credit of the country, which involves even a suspicion of its honor, is to sacrifice the substance to the shadow. A nation cannot take advantage of a quibble, like an attorney. The very life of its credit is in its punctilious integrity. It is this finer instinct, this nicer sensibility to shame, this possibility of a national conscience, that distinguishes a nation from a horde. And the office of Congress is in this respect a noble one. It is to see that this higher life of the Republic receives no detriment, to take care that this ideal commonwealth be not swamped in the actual. The country might perhaps go through the whitewashing of bankruptcy, but it would be literally the whitening of a sepulchre in which all

that makes it the hope of a higher civilization would be buried forever.

We hear much of the reconstruction of the South, but we should also bear in mind how much the whole country stands in need of the same beneficent process. As one of the first steps toward the restoration of confidence, and of the prosperity which draws life from it, our whole system of taxation and revenue needs scientific revision at the earliest moment. As at present organized, it is cumbrous, complicated, and expensive to a degree worthy of the Middle Ages. It is a nursery of fraud and corruption, oppressive to the honest and propitious only to knaves. Here again Congress has acted in entire contempt or ignorance of history and experience. It has multiplied enormously the number of offices that tempt men from legitimate and productive industry. It is making the public debt not only a burden, but a vexation, to every tax-payer in the country. We spend more in collecting a dollar than it would cost us on true principles of taxation to collect two. We seem to have considered complication, instead of simplicity, as the test of scientific method. Here at least is an opportunity for the exercise of that radicalism of which we have heard so much.

At the South also a great deal remains to be done, — something, perhaps, to be undone. It will be very easy, by ill-considered and vindictive legislation, to make an Ireland of that part of the country, to fix upon it an undying tradition of resentment and discontent. And the men whose voices are heard from one end of the land to the other should remember that it is not merely what we do, but what we say, that leaves ineffaceable traces behind it. There are people still left who apparently think that resentment can make part of sound policy, that we should in some way contrive it so that reconstruction should serve the purpose of punishment as well as prevention. But no such motives can ever enter into the method of a great statesman. The crimes of communities never fail of their just retribution; but it is the course of events, and not man, that deals it out. Whatever the relation of the rebellious States to the Union, the people of those States became our countrymen again the moment the war was over. We think it was wise, because necessary, to give

the freedman the protection of the ballot. We think it would be the height of unwisdom to tempt him to the use of it as an aggressive weapon. It was given him on grounds of policy, and not of natural right; and it is from this point of view that he should be taught to regard the use of it. To talk of universal suffrage as something to which man is entitled in mere virtue of his manhood carries us back to the days of social contracts, when men reconstructed society out of the depths of their inward consciousness, with a noble oblivion of history and experience, and cut down the living tree of freedom, the slow and orderly growth of ages, that they might set it up again, trimmed of all its branches, as a liberty-pole, beautiful for precision of outline, perhaps, but unhappily without roots. Universal suffrage is merely one of many political contrivances, and, like others that have gone before it, is to be tested by time. It is too early to speak of it as an established principle. Before the new relations of the late master and slave have had time to shape themselves into that natural order which we may disturb, but cannot prevent, it is clearly bad policy to urge the inferior into positions which make it hateful to the superior race, and for which it is necessarily unfit. We sometimes hear, to be sure, the conclusive argument, that it serves the rebels right; but we are inclined to prefer a method of treatment that will serve the country right. Under no circumstances can it be good policy to give ignorance an advantage over intelligence, or to train men to regard a majority in numbers as decisive in a question of moral expediency. What is bad among ignorant foreigners in New York will not be good among ignorant natives in South Carolina; for stupidity is of one nature, wherever it may be born. You cannot content a conquered rebel by disfranchising him, but you can by that simple process keep irritatingly active and aggressive in him whatever made him dangerous. A too easy inference is sometimes drawn from the fact that slavery was a barbarous anachronism, to the barbarism of the whole Southern community in all other respects. One of the natural results of the slave system was sparse settlement, and this, by rendering popular education impossible, and by lessening the restraints imposed by publicity and opinion, made crimes of violence

common. But a high state of refinement, culture, and especially political intelligence, may perfectly well coexist with such a state of things. We have been in the habit of regarding the South, and, we think, justly regarding it, as living under the influence of fundamental ideas at least a century and a half behind the rest of the civilized world. But we should remember that Lord Mohun, who was twice tried for murder, was the contemporary of Somers, Locke, Newton, and Addison. Whatever experiments we may try, we shall be forced at last to fall back on Southern intelligence as the chief factor in Southern regeneration. The war proved the people of the South to be endowed with some of the highest qualities that mark great races, — courage, persistency, discipline, and, above all, devotion to an idea, though a false one. We must not be impatient and forget that the roots of their overthrown organization reach as far back as those of our own, and will send up suckers long after the trunk has been cut down. A generation will be a short time in which to hope for even a sure advance toward settlement, and in order to any secure one we must win the ruling power of the South to our side. In the mean while it is the duty of government to make life safe and law regularly operative in all parts of the country alike. If the semi-independent autonomy of the States, so useful as a nursery of political experience, in any respect stand in the way of this, some means must be found of overcoming their resistance or quickening their inertia. Respect for law can never be bred but by the constant example of its equity and its inevitability. But the South must be made prosperous before it can be made orderly, and orderly before it can be prosperous; in other words, the two must go hand in hand, as necessary coefficients of the desired result. *Compelle eos intrare* must be interpreted metaphysically, if we would have it perdurably operative; for their territorial unity would be valueless without their intellectual sympathy. Geographically the South is subdued, and every year the growth of the North and West lessens the chances of its restoration to political supremacy. The natural gravitation of mutual interest is as sure to give us Canada, one of these days, as it is to incorporate the Rhenish provinces of Prussia with France. We need

have no fears for our preponderance. But we should be careful lest we render our ideas distasteful by forcing them upon communities wholly unripe to understand or receive them. We should rid ourselves of the stupid superstition that test oaths can ever do anything but give the unscrupulous an advantage over the honest. We are at this moment insisting on a qualification for office in Virginia which will exclude the very class of men whose co-operation is what we should seek by every honorable means to gain. The Southern protest against "carpet-baggers" was in some sort the natural protest of that self-respect and independence which we hope never to see extinguished in any American commonwealth. Let us have enough centralization to save us from the French anarchy of local parliaments, but never so much of it as to force upon any State, whether rebel or loyal, the intellectual stagnation and moral despair of the French Empire.

We look forward with well-grounded confidence to the administration of General Grant. Elected, it may be truly said, in spite of both parties, but in sympathy with the more judicious of the party of progress, he will be independent of the extremists, whether of blind advance or blinder reaction. Knowing by the most thorough experience the men he has conquered and the men he has led, he will know how to deal firmly with the one side and to moderate the other. As a soldier, he has been schooled to look forward to remote results rather than to be over-confident in immediate successes. He has shown an indomitable persistency in plans well considered and justified by good-fortune. He has chosen his lieutenants with instinctive felicity, and done justice to their merit with almost unexampled magnanimity. He possesses beyond most men that virtue of moderation which so many American politicians eschew as unpopular. Above all, he has an almost heroic gift of silence, which prevents him from allowing himself to be dragged from his moorings by the strong current of eloquence, and afterwards feeling bound to sacrifice his sense of what is prudent to the tyranny of his own consistency. We think that his administration will disappoint those only who believe that words are more potent than things in the conduct of states and in lasting influence on the conduct of men.